

From:
Hindu Education Foundation

Attn:
Thomas Adams, Executive Director,

To:
History–Social Science Subject Matter Committee, Instructional Quality Commission,
Sacramento, CA

Re: Supplementary Edits to History Social Science Framework Draft (Second Draft)
2015

Ref: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/documents/att1c6-8hss.doc> and
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/documents/nov20151d2oct89hsssmc.doc>

Dear Members,

We, on behalf of Hindu Education Foundation (HEF), had submitted our edits to the draft framework last week. We would like to submit a few supplementary edits to our earlier ones and also add a few modifications . This is after considering the proposed changes to the draft narrative that were announced on November 6th by IQC. Since we had submitted our suggestions just a day before the announcement, we believe that our edits submitted on November 3rd are yet to be considered. The edits contained herein supersede our earlier edits.

Though we see some positive changes proposed to the latest draft narrative, we still believe that lot more needs to be done to offer an accurate and fair portrayal of Hinduism and ancient India. The section on Hindu beliefs is cluttered and concepts such as Dharma and Karma seem to be used interchangeably and there is confusion between the terms Brahman (the 'divine principle of being') and Brahmin (the priestly community). The section on the Vedic culture does not provide a proper context of its authors including Rishikas - its women authors or its evolution into many theistic, atheistic and agnostic schools of thoughts. Hinduism is presented as a theistic monolith like other Abrahamic religions, which is both inaccurate and unfair.

We have detailed all the edits along with scholarly references. We humbly urge you to consider these edits in the revised draft of the framework.

Regards
Sandeep Dedge and Nihar S,
Coordinators,
Hindu Education Foundation (HEF)
Sunnyvale, California,
Email: coordinator@hindueducation.org
Phone: 408-829-1458

Grade Six – World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

Edit 1

Line 176 and 177

Current: (notably Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia, and Persia), the Nile Valley of Africa, northern India, China, and the lands around the Aegean Sea. By about 2000

Suggested: (notably Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia, and Persia), the Nile Valley of Africa, northern India, China, and the lands around the Aegean Sea. By about 2000

Justification: Mention of India needs to be on similar lines as other nations and geographies described.

Edit 2

Line 185 to 194

Current: Powerful people (warlords) took control of the tribes in larger areas and eventually the strongest warlords formed states or city-states with governments headed by kings or, very occasionally, queens, often claiming authority from gods and passing on power to their own descendants. Supported by political elites (nobles, officials, warriors) and priests, these monarchs imposed taxes on ordinary city dwellers and rural people to pay for bureaucracies, armies, irrigation works, and monumental architecture. Writing systems were first invented to serve governments, religions, and merchants, and later became means of transmitting religious, scientific, and literary ideas.

Suggested: *In some places*, powerful people (warlords) took control of the tribes in larger areas and eventually the strongest warlords formed states or city-states with governments headed by kings or, very occasionally, queens, often claiming authority from gods and passing on power to their own descendants. Supported by political elites (nobles, officials, warriors) and priests, these monarchs imposed taxes on ordinary city dwellers and rural people to pay for bureaucracies, armies, irrigation works, and monumental architecture. ***But there are exceptions as well, such as the Indus-Saraswati civilization in India. As archeologists point out, the city-states had no centralized control and the rulers seem to have had a lot less power. It is believed that they were managed by a community based distributed system of power.*** Writing systems were first invented to serve governments, religions, and merchants, and later became means of transmitting religious, scientific, and literary ideas.

Justification: This section privileges the eurocentric narrative that all civilizations were backward till the onset of Western modernism. While this may be true in many instances, this simplistic generalization takes away the fact that there were many ancient civilizations that do not conform to this narrative, one of the most important being the Indus Saraswati civilization. Since it was among the largest civilizations of that time, this exception should be mentioned. For detailed information see Danino 2010[1].

John Marshall, one of the original excavators of earliest sites of this civilization noted "There is nothing that we know of in prehistoric Egypt or Mesopotamia or anywhere else in western Asia to compare with the well-built baths and commodious houses of the citizens of Mohenjodaro. In those countries, much money and thought were lavished on the building of magnificent temples for the Gods and on the places and tombs of kings, but the rest of the people seemingly had to content themselves with insignificant dwellings of mud. In the Indus Valley, the picture is reversed and the finest structures are those directed for the convenience of the citizens."[2]

J.M. Kenoyer, scholar of ancient India and an archeologist who worked excavating these sites, notes that trade and religion rather than military might were real instruments of authority; indeed, no piece of Harappan art glorifies rulers, conquest or warfare.[1][3]

Archeologist Rita Wright, emphasizes 'a growing awareness that [the Harappan civilization] does not fit into the social, political and economic categories developed for the study of other states', such as Mesopotamia or Egypt, which had centralized administrative structures. 'Among the Harappans on the other hand, a pattern of decentralization appears to have persisted'. In the formative era, Wright also notes "an absence of factionalism" and "a unified material culture", which, to her, point to 'production and distribution systems based upon kinship or community-related organizations'.[1][4]

Danino notes "this civilization thus displays an individuality of its own based on its decentralization and community based distribution of power- two traits that any rural Indian of today will instantly relate to."[1].

Edit 3

Line 193 and 194

Current: religious, scientific, and literary ideas. Some of the religions of this era, such as early Hinduism and Judaism, set the stage for later world belief systems.

Suggested: religious, scientific, and literary ideas. Some of the religions of this era, such as early Hinduism and Judaism, set the stage for later world belief systems.

Justification: All religions evolve over a period of time. There is no particular period

which can be demarcated as early Hinduism. Also it needs to be consistent with other religions mentioned in this context.

Edit 4

Line 379

Current: got under way in the Indus River valley in India and in the Huang He (Yellow)

Suggested: got under way in the **Indus River valley and Saraswati River banks** in India and in the Huang He (Yellow)

Justification: The civilization was spread across the two river banks[1] as mentioned in the draft narrative in the section on Early Civilizations of India. This needs to be consistent across the sections.

Edit 5

Line 786 and 787

Current: plain (Ganges River). The Indus River and its tributaries, along with Saraswati (or

Suggested: The Indus River **and Saraswati Rivers** along with **their** tributaries

Justification: Saraswati was a river system with tributaries Drishadvati, Satudri (Sutlej), Chandrabhaga (Chenab), Vipasa (Beas) and the Iravati (Ravi)[1]

Edit 6

Line 804 and 805

Current: such as a male figure that resembles the Hindu God Shiva in a meditating posture, as well as small clay figures in the posture of the traditional Hindu greeting “namaste.”

Suggested: such as a male figure that resembles the Hindu God Shiva in a meditating posture, ~~as well as~~ small clay figures in the posture of the traditional Hindu greeting “namaste” **and dolls with vermilion on forehead like that worn by many Hindu men and women wear even today**[5].

Justification: It is important for children to understand this continuity with current day customs of many Hindu American kids so that, these customs are understood, and accepted and not stereotyped. Especially the ‘bindi’ (vermilion on forehead) has been a subject of ridicule in many schools and hence needs a mention. The pictures of the excavated artifacts mentioned, can be found in [5].

Edit 7

Line 812

Current: a complex oral tradition. In that period, people speaking Indic languages, which

Suggestion: a complex oral tradition. These texts contain thousands of hymns, and were composed over several millennia by many generations of sages called Rishis (male) and Rishikas[6] (female). These Rishis and Rishikas came from diverse communities and social backgrounds and have been highly revered in the Hindu tradition.

Justification: The section talks about the Vedic period but no proper context is provided as to what these Vedas are, who their composers were, etc. The suggested edit will provide the context for the section.

The Rig Veda records the names of 27 Rishikas, female sages and the hymns they composed[6]. This fact is important as no other major religion has women authors to their sacred texts and even modern creations such as Constitutions of many countries were solely written by men.

The most important Rishis such as Valmiki (was a hunter earlier), Vyasa (son of a fisherwoman), Jabali (son of a cook), Vishwamitra (was a king), Lopamudra (daughter of a king), Aushija (son of a domestic servant), Gritasamada (son of a Kshtriya) etc. came from diverse social backgrounds. The origins of most Rishis is not known but wherever known they have not been necessarily Brahmins by birth. Moreover Rishis were considered to transcend social categorization.

Edit 7

Line 812 to 821

Current: In that period, people speaking Indic languages, which are part of the larger Indo-European family of languages, entered South Asia, probably by way of Iran. Gradually, Indic languages, including Sanskrit, spread across northern India. They included the ancestors of such modern languages as Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali. The early Indic speakers were most likely animal herders. They may have arrived in India in scattered bands, later intermarrying with populations perhaps ancestral to those who speak Dravidian languages, such as Tamil and Telugu in southern India and Sri Lanka today. In the same era, nomads who spoke Indo-Iranian languages moved into Persia. Indic, Iranian, and most European languages are related. There is another point of view that suggests that the language was indigenous to India and spread northward, but it is a minority position.

Suggested: Since these texts are in Sanskrit, an ancient language which has similarities with the Indo-European family of languages, some scholars posited that Sanskrit speaking people might have come from outside of India, possibly by way of

Iran. But other scholars disagree and suggest that they were natives of India. This is a complex question the answer to which is still being searched through the findings of archeology and linguistics.

Justification: This is a highly contested theory and we are happy that a line on the alternate theory has been added. But it is necessary to reword it so as not to emphasize one position over the other and also not to base too many theories on top of this assumed theory. We have suggested a very simple alternative that should be satisfactory from all viewpoints and also considerably reduces the number of words.

Here is a gist of the current status of the different aspects of this theory: Many (but not all) linguists posit the migration theory to explain how Sanskrit belonging to Indo-European family of languages is found in India. 'The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History'[7] edited by Edwin Bryant lists the various arguments by different authors supporting and opposing the migration theory based on Linguistics.

While that is the case in Linguistics, most archeologists favor the position that there exists no credible archeological evidence to support such a large scale migration. J M Kenoyer notes "there is no archaeological or biological evidence for invasions or mass migrations into the Indus Valley between the end of the Harappan phase, about 1900 B.C. and the beginning of the Early Historic Period around 600 B.C."[8] See also B B Lal[9], S.P Gupta[11], S R.Rao[11] among most archeologists who have questioned Aryan Invasion / Migration theory on lack of credible archeological evidence.

Recent entrant to this field has been the field of genetics which too has thrown up no conclusive evidence in terms of distinct genetic markers that would be visible in any large scale migrations.[12][13][14][15]

While this continues to be debated in the scholarly realm, it is fair that students know that this is a complex question that continues to be researched by scholars.

Edit 8

Line 823 to 825

Current: In this era, Vedic culture emerged as a belief system that combined the beliefs of Indic speakers with those of older populations.

Suggested: (We suggest that the alternative be moved to after line 833 after the concept of Brahman is explained so that it provides context.)

The Vedic worldview, being monistic and pantheistic, allowed the blending of rituals, customs, and beliefs of different communities that dotted the landscape of India, well beyond the confines of the river banks where most of the Vedic hymns were

composed. This meshing together of different traditions led to the emergence of Vedic culture. Many theistic, atheistic and agnostic philosophical schools of thoughts grew as part of the Vedic tradition and have continued to exist as spiritual traditions in Hinduism.

Justification: Vedic culture is not a belief system so we believe that the sentence needs to be changed to reflect correct understanding of the concept. There was no one belief system like in the Abrahamic religions but multiple schools of thoughts that had their worldviews. It is also important to explain the organic evolution of Vedic culture in a way that it does not privilege the Aryan Invasion /Migration theory considering it is not an established fact but a contested theory. This sentence has to be agnostic to theories on origins of Sanskrit speaking people as it is still an open question in history.

Also out of the six philosophical schools of thought in Hinduism, namely Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaishesika, Mimamsa and Vedanta, only two can be classified as definitely theistic, the other four can either be categorised as atheistic or agnostic[16]. This unique feature in Hinduism, of not being contingent on belief in a creator God, needs to be mentioned so that children can understand and appreciate its difference from Abrahamic religions. Hinduism should not be represented only from a theistic perspective from the prism of Western and Abrahamic religions.

Please read this edit after reading the Edit 11 where we suggest the paragraph should be placed.

Edit 9

Line 827 to 829

Current: Brahmins, that is, priestly families, assumed authority over complex devotional rituals, but many important sages, such as Valmiki and Vyasa, were not brahmins.

Suggested: Request deletion of these lines.

Justification: There seems to be confusion between the words 'Brahman' which means 'all pervading reality' or 'divine principle of being' and 'Brahmin' (spelt as brAhmin or brAhmaN) which is a varna or a community. This section should talk in essence about the philosophy of 'Brahman' and its manifestation as a thought and culture which is essentially the Vedic culture and not about the 'Brahmin' community. Since the words sound similar there seems to have been some confusion. The authors of the Vedas and Upanishads who propounded the concept of 'Brahman' are not referred to as Brahmins but as 'Rishis' in all texts including the Vedas themselves.

Secondly, the authority over many rituals remained distributed among different

communities. Several other communities are known to perform rituals and priestly functions. There is no evidence that Brahmins assumed monopoly over the devotional rituals. For example Nishads, the boatmen have authority over the prestigious Ganga pujaiya for newlywed couples. For some of the numerous other examples, please refer to [17] which has information on a number of non-Brahmin communities that performed priestly functions and temple rituals like Vairavis from Melakkaran community who officiate rituals at Nattukottai Chetti community temple, Chemmis or Shemmis were temple priests that were appointed by Chieftains of Paniyans etc. Distribution of responsibility of performing complex rituals amongst diverse communities has been a continuing tradition in India.

Thirdly, Valmiki and Vyasa are not exceptions but have been central to Hinduism having composed the most important epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Vyasa is also known as the original Guru in Hindu tradition for having collected, compiled and catalogued the Vedas. There are many other names of Rishis and Rishikas like Lopamudra, Gritasamada, Vishwamitra, Aushija etc who were not born to Brahmin parents. We have mentioned about them in earlier edits. But while deleting the second line, the essence of this fact has to be captured and we suggest it be captured in the wordings in our edit for line number 812 in Edit 6, above.

Edit 10

Line 829 and 830

Current: Ancient Hindu sages (brahmins and others) expounded the idea of the oneness of all living things and of Brahman as the divine principle of being.

Suggested: Rishis, or ancient Hindu sages (~~brahmins and others~~) expounded the idea of the oneness of all living things and of Brahman as the divine principle of being.

Justification: The parenthetical is unfair to non-Brahmin communities which have immensely contributed to Vedic culture. The worldview of 'Brahman' emerged out of the Vedas, whose composers are known as Rishis (sages) and not Brahmins (the priestly varṇa). It looks like again there is some confusion between the words 'Brahman' the concept and 'Brahmin' the varna. They are two different things. We have explained the difference between the two in our comments above.

As noted in our justification for Edit 6, the most important Rishis such as Valmiki (was a hunter earlier), Vyasa (son of a fisherwoman), Jabali (son of a cook), Vishwamitra (was a king), Lopamudra (daughter of a king), Aushija (son of a "domestic servant"), Gritasamada (son of a Kshatriya) etc. came from diverse social backgrounds. The origins of most Rishis is not known but wherever known they have not been necessarily Brahmins by birth. Moreover Rishis were considered to transcend social categorization.

Edit 11

Line 830 to 833

Current: The Hindu tradition is thus monistic, the idea of reality being a unitary whole. Brahman may be manifested in many ways, including incarnation in the form of deities, including Vishnu, preserver of the world, and Shiva, creator and destroyer of the world.

Suggested: **Much of the** Hindu tradition is thus monistic (the idea of reality being a unitary whole) **and pantheistic (the idea that there is divinity within all beings and things)**. Brahman may be manifested in many ways, including ~~incarnation~~ in the form of deities, including ***Brahma, the creator***, Vishnu, ~~the~~ preserver of the world and Shiva, ~~the creator and destroyer~~ ***the dissolver, representing the principle of continuous creation, maintenance and dissolution of the Universe. Brahman may also manifest as different goddesses such as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati and also as elements of nature such as trees, plants, animals, rivers and mountains.***

Justification: Hindu tradition is not just monistic but also pantheistic which needs to be mentioned. 'Monistic' does not fully capture the idea of 'Brahman'. There also seems to be confusion between the words 'Brahman' which means 'all pervading reality' or 'divine principle of being' and deity named 'Brahma' who is the creator in Hindu mythology. Brahman manifests as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva representing the principle of continuous creation, maintenance and dissolution. Please change the word 'destroyer' to 'dissolver', as 'destroyer' could be stereotyped as evil and explain the significance of this.

Vishnu and Shiva are not 'incarnations' or avatars but forms of Brahman. Rama, Krishna were incarnations of Vishnu.

It is also important to mention that other deities and natural elements too are seen as forms of Brahman.

Edit 13

Suggested addition: Students read a few hymns from the 'Bhumi Sukta' excerpted from the Vedas to discover the nature of Vedic hymns. While reading the translation of this hymn dedicated to mother earth, the teacher may point out that since its composers lived close to nature, Vedas adore rivers, forests, mountains and natural elements.

"Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,
in which food and cornfields have come to be,
in which lives all that breathes and that moves,

may she confer on us the finest of her yield.

Earth, in which the waters, common to all,
moving on all sides, flow unfailingly, day and night,
may she pour on us milk in many streams,
and endow us with luster,

May those born of thee, O Earth,
be of our welfare, free from sickness and waste,
wakeful through a long life, we shall become bearers of tribute to thee.

Earth, my mother, set me securely with bliss in full accord with heaven,
O wise one, uphold me in grace and splendor.” (Atharva Veda 12 1.1)[18]

Justification: We request the addition of the Bhumi Sukta from Atharva Veda so that students can get a glimpse of what is in the Vedas, the central texts of Hinduism. This is world’s oldest surviving text that uses the metaphor ‘Mother Earth’. Students will be greatly enriched from it. We have chosen three paragraphs out of 63 from the Bhumi Sukta (hymn to mother earth) are easy to understand as they do not contain too many names and are also most relevant and representative of the Bhumi Sukta. These hymns can be considered by students and teachers to understand about the composers.

Edit 12

Line 838 to 849

Current: Performance of duties and ceremonies became one dimension of the supreme quest to achieve oneness with divine reality. That fulfillment, however, demands obedience to the moral law of the universe, called dharma, which also refers to performance of social duties. Success or failure at existing in harmony with dharma determines how many times an individual might be subject to reincarnation, or repeated death and rebirth at either lower or higher positions of moral and ritual purity. Progress toward spiritual realization is governed by karma, the principle that right deeds done in one lifetime condition an individual’s place in the next one.

Suggested:

The objectives of human life were broadly categorized into Dharma (fulfilling responsibility towards other beings in harmony with the natural law of the universe), kāma (fulfilling desires), artha (achieving material prosperity) and mokṣa (attaining spiritual liberation)[19]. As one goes through the cycle of reincarnation, various actions the individual performs were said to be subject to the principle of 'karma', which suggested that the fruits of good or bad deeds done in one lifetime would

affect one's well-being in this life as well as the next. A person wishing to step out of the cycle of reincarnation would pursue mokṣa (spiritual liberation). The Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita propounded the concept of yoga by which one could progress spiritually and achieve oneness with the divine reality. Yoga expounded different paths to achieve this including the path of selfless action (Karma), the path of Knowledge (Jnana), path of devotion (Bhakti) and path of meditation (Raja).

Justification: This paragraph on the teachings of Hinduism has several problems on counts of accuracy and emphasis. A lot of teachings seem to be jumbled up and terms and concepts used interchangeably.

1) For example the first line selectively talks of “Performance of duties and ceremonies” as “one dimension of the supreme quest to achieve oneness with divine reality.” The other dimensions are not mentioned. For holistic representation, it is important to mention all the four pathways of Yoga as explained in the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. These are, the path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga), path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga), path of selfless action (Karma Yoga) and path of meditation (Raja Yoga). It would be wrong to cull some pieces from them and present them in isolation.

2) ‘obedience’ is a wrong word. Unlike the Abrahamic religions, Dharma has no strict rules or commandments.

3) Spiritual progress is not just by Karma but through the four paths of Yoga.

4) Moksha (liberation from birth) is through spiritual realization.

5) The four purusharthas or the goals of a human life are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha which are completely missed. Hindu savants of all times recognized kAma and Artha to be natural and essential features of the human condition, which should be cultivated with finesse and care. This is why they composed several texts related to these objectives such as the kAmaSutra and arthashastra. Also, the Hindu worldview does not admit a separation of secular from the spiritual. The pursuit of Kama and Artha are as essential to Hindu practice as that of Dharma and Moksha.

This section has to be uncluttered. We suggest a very simple alternative which sums up the concepts. The similar sections for other religions are very well written but teachings of Hinduism are inaccurately represented or are obscured in difficult wordings.

Edit 13

Line 846 and 847

Current: Many of the central practices of Hinduism today, including home and temple worship, yoga and meditation, rites of passage (samskaras)

Suggestion: Many of the central practices of Hinduism today, including **Ahimsa (non harming)**, home and temple worship, yoga and meditation, rites of passage (samskaras), **spiritual art (music, dance, sculpture)** and **Ayurveda (the practice of good health)**.

Justification: Include Ahimsa, as it developed over the Vedic period with the first mention in the Vedas and further development in Upanishads. It is one of the ten tenets of Yoga mentioned as part of Yama-Niyama in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. It has been central to Hinduism[20][21].

Also add Ayurveda which developed over this period of time and ritual music and dance which later developed into Indian classical music. Bharata's nAtyashAstra which is a seminal text on Hindu art is described as the fifth Veda.

Edit 14

Line 858

Current: to a particular varna by his professional excellence and his good conduct, not by

Suggestion: to a particular varna by his professional excellence ~~and his good conduct~~, not by

Justification: It is erroneous to say that the varna was decided by "good conduct". "Good conduct" was a requirement for all varnas in their respective duties. A 'vaishya' (businessman), for example, would not move to any other varna like say being a kshatriya (warrior) based on being ethical in his business.. 'Good conduct' would only help that person to become a better 'vaishya' (businessman) not a warrior. Mobility was on count of various other reasons such as one's aptitude.

Edit 15

Line 872 to 877

Current: Caste, however, is a term that social scientists use to describe any particularly unbending social structure, for example, slave-holding society in the American south before the Civil War, which can make the "caste" label offensive. Today many Hindus, in India and in the United States, do not identify themselves as belonging to a caste. Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure rather than a religious belief.

Suggestion: Caste, however, is a term that social scientists use to describe any particularly unbending social structure, for example, slave-holding society in the American south before the Civil War, which can make the "caste" label offensive.

Today many Hindus, in India and in the United States, do not identify themselves as belonging to a caste. Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure rather than a religious belief.

Justification: Request deletion of the first part that makes references to slave-holding society. Since this is a complex issue and it has been evident that teachers find it hard to understand and present it, any references that can lead to inaccurate understanding and stereotyping of Hindu children should be completely avoided in keeping with Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content.

Edit 16

Line 883 and 884

Current: premodern societies. Although ancient India was a patriarchy, women had a right to their personal wealth, especially jewelry, gold, and silver, but fewer property

Suggested: premodern societies. ~~Although ancient India was a patriarchy,~~ In ancient India women had a right to their personal wealth, especially jewelry, gold, and silver, ~~but fewer property~~

Justification: Almost all societies, ancient and modern have been by and large patriarchal except for very few and small exceptions. But in the current framework, only Hinduism and ancient India is being singled out and characterized as patriarchal while the similar characterizations for European civilizations is not done. Hinduism is the only religion that has women as authors of the earliest known sacred texts that are central to their religion; whereas this is unheard of in any other ancient society. Please also consider this against the fact that most modern nations have had no women who are founding authors to their Constitution.

Fewer property rights for women is also true for most cultures, and true for even modern nations till very recently, so to single out ancient India and Hinduism to make this point is wrong and violates the standards on adverse reflection. In fact, many communities in India like the famous Marumakkathayam in the Southern Indian state of Kerala had matrilineal inheritance.

Edit 18

After line 885

Suggested addition: Many women were composers of the sacred texts, the Vedas, from the earliest times. These sages are probably the world's earliest known female poets. Many women also participated in scholarly public debates and were considered to be authorities on spiritual matters.

Justification: The Rig Veda itself records the names of 27 female sages and the hymns they composed[22] . We know of no other female poets who were as old as the Rishikas of the Rig Veda, hence it is essential to mention this from a point of view of covering the contributions of women as per the standards. Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content, Education Code Sections 51501, 60040(a), and 60044(a) state that "Whenever instructional material presents developments in history or current events or achievements in art, science, or any other field, the contributions of women and men should be represented in approximately equal numbers."

Rishikas (women sages) have authored some of the most sublime and important hymns of the Vedas such 'Vak Suktam' by Rishika Vaghambrini and the Surya Suktam (or Vivah Suktam) by Rishika Surya Savitri, which are chanted even today during the Hindu marriage ritual.

We know of no women poets as old as the Rig Vedic composers hence the fact that they are oldest known female poets needs to be mentioned.

Gargi is an example of women who were considered authority in spiritual matters. Gargi was given the title Brahnavadini (which means the expounder of the ultimate truth) and represented all the learned sages in debating the famous Sage Yagnavalakya. Their dialogue is a famous treatise in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. For a brief introduction of Gargi Vachaknavi the Wikipedia article also could be referred to (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargi_Vachaknavi). Women being debaters and authorities on spiritual matters is unique to Hinduism. We do not have any such examples in other major religions. And hence this has to be mentioned.

Edit 19

After Line 907

Suggested addition: The Jain understanding of non harming is expansive, extending to one's thoughts, speech and actions, avoiding harm through these modes toward any living being.

Justification: Request adding a line on Jainism that reflects its teachings. We think Jainism is under-represented in the section.

Edit 20

Line 909

Current: It has continued to play a role in modern India, notably in Mohandas Gandhi's

Suggested: The key ideas of Indian civilization such as Dharma, Yoga and Ahimsa as propounded by Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism have continued to influence and

shape the Indian society, notably in influencing leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, in inspiring the struggle for Independence against the Colonial rule and in the formation of the Republic of India.

Justification: Mahatma Gandhi was inspired by the idea of Ahimsa from his readings of the Bhagavad Gita as he himself has noted in his writings. He has extensively written about the influences in his writings.

In 'Gita, My Mother', Gandhi writes "After 40 years of unremitting endeavor fully to enforce the teaching of the Gita in my own life, I have in all humility felt that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of satya and ahimsa in every shape and form." [20] Mahatma Gandhi relied on the teachings of Bhagavad Gita especially its ideas of 'Aparigraha' and 'Sambhava' to understand the concept of Ahimsa and also in nurturing the concept of 'satyagraha' which was the application of Ahimsa (non-harming) to the political and social spheres, especially in the political resistance against the Colonial rulers. Bhagavad Gita had a deep influence on him.

He wrote in his autobiography "I started reading Swami Vivekananda's Rajayoga with some of these friends, and M. N. Dvivedi's Rajayoga with others. I had to read Patanjali's Yoga Sutras with one friend, and the Bhagavad Gita with quite a number. We formed a sort of Seekers' Club where we had regular readings. I already had faith in the Gita, which had a fascination for me. Now I realized the necessity of diving deeper into it. I had one or two translations, by means of which I tried to understand the original Samskrit." "What effect this reading of the Gita had on my friends only they can say, but to me the Gita became an infallible guide of conduct. It became my dictionary of daily reference. Just as I turned to the English dictionary for the meanings of English words that I did not understand, I turned to this dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. Words like aparigraha (non-possession) and samabhava (equability) gripped me. How to cultivate and preserve that equability was the question. How was one to treat alike insulting, insolent, and corrupt officials, co-workers of yesterday raising meaningless opposition, and men who had always been good to one?" [21]

Edit 21

Line 911

Current: In the late fourth century BCE Chandragupta Maurya unified most of India

Suggested: In the late fourth century BCE Chandragupta Maurya unified most of India through conquests and diplomacy and established the Maurya Empire. **The Artha Shastra, a treatise which covers topics from statecraft to economics to ethics, is ascribed to Maurya's royal advisor, Chanakya, and still referred to today as a basis for Indian political thought.**

Justification: The Artha Shastra [25] is one of the most important texts of ancient Indians that shape Indian political thought. Learning about the Artha Shastra will

plant a seed for a point of comparison to other political theories, such as Adam Smith's The Invisible Hand or Karl Marx's the Communist Manifesto.

Edit 22

Line 919

Current: change of heart, converted to Buddhism, and devoted the rest of his rule to

Suggested: change of heart, ~~converted to~~ embraced Buddhism, and devoted the rest of his rule to

Justification: 'Conversion' is not the right word. It is an Abrahamic concept. Indian religions did not have the concept of religious conversion.

Grade Seven – World History and Geography: Medieval and Early Modern Times

Edit 1

Line 686

Current: settlers from northern into southern India helped produce a common Indic culture

Suggested: settlers from northern into southern India helped ~~produce~~ **develop** a common Indic culture

Justification: 'produce' is not the right word, change it to 'develop'

Edit 2

Line 689

Current: temples and schools spread. Sanskrit became the principal literary language throughout India.

Suggested: temples and schools spread. Sanskrit became the principal literary language throughout India ***with landmark works being produced by writers such as the Hindu poet Kalidasa and the Buddhist monk Vasubandhu.***

Justification: Add the names of two very famous Hindu and Buddhist poets of the time.

Edit 3

Line 690

Current: areas of Afroeurasia include the cotton textile industry, the technology of

Suggested: areas of Afroeurasia include mathematics, the cotton textile industry, the technology of

Justification: Mathematics was one of the foremost of contributions of Indian civilization to Afroeurasia and hence should be mentioned first.

Edit 4

Line 694

Current: achievements in science, math, art, architecture, and Sanskrit literature. After the

Suggested: achievements in science, math, art (including Music and Dance), architecture, and Sanskrit literature. After the

Justification: Add to emphasize music and dance.

Edit 5

Line 709

Current: and Ramananda. Even though India was not unified into one state, nor did its

Suggested: Ravidas, Alvars, and Ramananda. Even though India was not unified into one state, nor did its

Justification: Add Ravidas and Alvars along with Mira bai and others to show the geographical and social diversity in Bhakti movement. For introduction of Ravidas and Alvars their Wikipedia pages also provide some introductory information.

Ravidas: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ravidas>

Alvars: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvars>

Edit 6

Line 722

Current: modern rulers displayed their power through temples and that the architectural

Suggested: modern rulers displayed their ~~power~~ cultural sophistication, generosity and military accomplishments through temples and inscriptions therein and that the architectural

Justification: Not all pre-modern rulers built temples to display their power. Also, Cholas especially were known to have built temples of different sects and communities and not just their own.

Edit 7

Line 731 and 732

Current: spreading their religions. As it moved outside of India and became a universal religion, Buddhism changed. In 600 BCE, Buddha was sage, a wise

Suggested: spreading their religions. ~~As it moved outside of India and became a universal religion, Buddhism changed.~~ In 600 BCE, Buddha was sage, a wise

Justification: It is completely inaccurate to say that Buddha's teachings were not universal before they moved out of India. There is absolutely no proof to suggest that Buddhism became universal only after moving out of India.

Edit 8

Line 749

Suggested addition: In southern India, the Hindu Vijayanagara empire dominated the scene for about 250 years and ushered in a period of cultural revival, the highlights of which were classic literature in the Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada languages. Its prosperous capital, Hampi (which was described by many European and Middle Eastern chroniclers), was the site of magnificent temples before being plundered by armies of the neighboring sultanates. Its ruins are a UNESCO world heritage site.

Justification: Vijayanagara kingdom represents one of the most important empires of India. The mention of the Vijayanagara empire here offers the context about why most of the population of South Asia remained Hindu which otherwise is completely missing. Please see [26]

Edit 9

Line 751 and 752

Current: example of cultural transmission, students may trace the Gupta advances in astronomy and mathematics (particularly the numeral system which included a

Suggested: example of cultural transmission, students may trace the **advances in India such as astronomy and mathematics during the Gupta period** ~~Gupta advances in astronomy and mathematics~~ (particularly the numeral system which included a

Justification: The advances cannot be labelled as Gupta advances. These advances were continuous with the growth of these fields in India under various empires and reached new heights in Gupta period with the support of the Guptas. Labeling them as Gupta advances makes these advances look like they were isolated ones only specific to Gupta period and that only the Gupta state sponsored that work.

Edit 10

Line 1544 to 1545

Current: was founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer who challenged the authority of the Brahmins and the Hindu caste order. Students learn about the Sikh Scripture

Suggested: was founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer ~~who challenged the authority of the Brahmins and the caste order~~ who propounded the message of equality, fraternal love and virtue. Students learn about the Sikh Scripture

Justification: This adversely reflects on Hinduism and is in violation with the Standards. It be replaced with positive contributions of Sikhism without adversely reflecting on Hinduism.

Edit 11

Line 1557

Suggested addition: During this period, the Central and Southern parts of India saw the emergence of native empires that offered resistance to the hegemony and persecution of the Mughal rulers. Prominent among them was the Maratha empire established in 1618 CE by Shivaji Maharaj, which saw a resurgence of Hindu culture and traditions.

Justification: It is important to mention the other developments also that make the narrative richer and representative to the current period. While there was religious persecution, during this era, there also sprung up empires that offered credible resistance to this, including the Marathas and the Sikhs. In this respect, it is important to mention about Shivaji Maharaj and the Maratha kingdom which not only offered resistance to the Mughals but also went on to rule significant parts of India and under whom the Bhakti movement flourished. Please read [27].

References

- [1] p100 to p121, Danino, Michel 2010. Lost River: On the Trail of the Sarasvati. Penguin Books
- [2] Marshall, John, 'Mohenjo-daro', Illustrated London News ILN, 27 Feb 1927, quoted by Machintosh Jane R., A Peaceful Realm, p21
- [3] Kenoyer, Jonathan Mark, 'Early City-States in South Asia: Cross-Cultural Approaches, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1997
- [4] Wright, Rita P., 'The Indus Valley and Mesopotamians Civilizations: A Comparative View of Ceramic Technology', in Old Problems and New Perspectives in the archeology of South Asia.
- [5] Braj Basi Lal (2002). page 243 and page 82. The Sarasvatī flows on: the continuity of Indian culture. Aryan Books International. ISBN 978-81-7305-202-6. (B. B. Lal, is a renowned Indian archaeologist. He was the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) from 1968 to 1972, and has served as Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. He also worked in for UNESCO committees.)
- [6] Swamini Atmaprajnananda Saraswati, May 2, 2013, 'Rishikas of the Rigveda', D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.
- [7] The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History Paperback – September 24, 2005, Edited by Edwin Bryant ISBN-13: 978-0700714636
- [8] Kenoyer 1998, pg. 174, Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization. Oxford University Press and American Institute of Pakistan Studies, Karachi.
- [9] Braj Basi La (2010), *Origin of Indian Civilization*, Edited by Bal Ram Singh, Center for Indic Studies, Dartmouth, USA, 2010.
- [10] S.P.Gupta, 1999, Indus Saraswati Civilization: Origins, Problems and Issues, India Pratibha Prakashan, ISBN 8185268460 / 9788185268460
- [11] S R Rao, Dawn and Devolution of the Indus Civilization, ISBN 81-85179-74-3, Delhi: Aditya Prakashan (1991) (Dr. S. R. Rao, was an Indian archaeologist who led teams credited with the discovery of a number of Harappan sites including the port city Lothal and Bet Dwarka in Gujarat.)

[12] Mait Metspalu et al 9,December, 2011, The American Journal of Human Genetics, Volume 89, Issue 6

[13] Toomas Kivisild et al, "An Indian Ancestry: a Key for Understanding Human Diversity in Europe and Beyond", ch. 31 of Archaeogenetics: DNA and the population prehistory of Europe, ed. Colin Renfrew & Katie Boyle (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2000), pp. 267-275.

[14] T. Kivisild et al "The Genetic Heritage of the Earliest Settlers Persists Both in Indian Tribal and Caste Populations," American Journal of Human Genetics and the Aryan Debate / p. 13

[15] Sanghamitra Sengupta et al "Polarity and Temporality of High-Resolution Y-Chromosome Distributions in India Identify Both Indigenous and Exogenous Expansions and Reveal Minor Genetic Influence of Central Asian Pastoralists," American Journal of Human Genetics, February 2006; 78(2):202-21.

[16] Dasgupta Surendranath, 'A History of Indian Philosophy', Volume 1, Cambridge University Press, 1922

[17] Thurston, Edgar; Rangachari, K 1855-1935; 'Castes and tribes of southern India', Volume 6, Madras Government Press

[18] Bose, Abinash Chandra, Hymns from the Vedas: Original Text and English Translation with Introduction and Notes. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966

[19] Morgan, Kenneth (1987). The Religion of the Hindus. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass.

[20] Gandhi Mohandas K, 'Gita, My Mother', Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, published 1965

[21] Gandhi Mohandas K, 1927, 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth', translated from Gujarati by Mahadev Desai.

[22] Swamini Atmaprajnananda Saraswati, May 2, 2013, 'Rishikas of the Rigveda', D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.

[23] Devdutt Pattanaik, Myth=Mithya: A Handbook of Hindu Mythology. Penguin Books India, 2006. ISBN 9780143099703.

[24] Devdutt Pattanaik, Business Sutra : A Very Indian Approach to Management. Aleph Book

[25] 'Arthashastra' by Kautilya, translated by R. Shamasastri (1915)

[26] "The Kingdom of Vijayanagara," in The History and Culture of the Indian People, edited by R. C. Majumdar (Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960)

[27] "The Maratha Supremacy" in The History and Culture of the Indian People, edited by R. C. Majumdar (Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960)